

One day I was watching one of those shows it seems to always be on TV during the day. These men were having a contest to see who could buy tickets for a Broadway show by cutting the furthest in line. People had been waiting for these tickets for hours. They tried different strategies with no success. But the guy who won just walked all the way to the front of the line by telling people "Sorry, I don't wait in lines. I don't do lines." People were angry, plenty of judgy looks. But nobody stopped him and he bought a ticket. I watched it maybe a decade ago, and I've never forgotten it because his brazenness and just walking to the front, saying I don't do lines resonates with me. Because I think deep down all of us would love to be able to get their life doing that. We don't wanna have to wait in a line. We don't have to wait for a delivery. We don't wanna have to wait for things and we just wanna get to the front.

That's understandable; the problem is that we don't wanna wait for God. Our sermon this morning is really about God's timing. All of us would say that God's timing is perfect, but if we were honest, we would also say that it's slow. And we say it's perfect as a matter of faith because we know it doesn't feel that way most of the time. Most of the time it feels like waiting forever in an excruciatingly long line and you're not sure if it's really gonna be worth it at the end. And we just wanna cut. David is gonna face that same temptation. In fact, right in front of us will have a very easy opportunity for a shortcut on God's timing let's take a look in 1 Samuel 24.

I. Trust in God's timing (v. 1-7).

This is what David has to learn.

He's going to need to learn to trust God's timing.

Primarily God's timing of when Saul will be removed and David will become king.

David was anointed king as a boy.

When he was young, God said you will be the next king.

When he was younger than that, God told Saul he was done.

And now David is old.
He has been married and is a veteran of many wars.
And yet he still is not king.
It isn't time yet.

And right now, he seems further away from the kingdom than ever.
He is an exile in his own land.
And God won't let him escape and go to foreign lands.
For some reason, he is here, and Saul will not stop.

Verse 1, **"When Saul returned from following the Philistines he was told, 'Behold, David is in the wilderness of Engedi.'"**

Saul finishes fighting a war.
And he immediately resumes trying to kill David.
We pick up right where we ended in 23.
And we see that David is stuck in the wilderness.

Verse 2, **"then Celtic, 3000 chosen men out of all Israel and went to seek David and his men in front of the Wildgoats rocks."**

This is the place David is living.
He is basically lost in the wilderness.
In a place that the only people who come here are shepherds.
We don't know how many years it has been but it's been a lot.
And then the unexpected happens.

Verse 3, **"And he came to the sheepfolds by the way, where there was a cave, and Saul went in to relieve himself."**

That is what it sounds like.
This is a nice biblical way to say that Saul needs to go to the bathroom.
And he needs some privacy.
He literally disrobes himself and covers his feet.
Because this will take some time.

"Now David and his men were sitting in the innermost parts of the cave."

It just so happens, providentially that David is already there.
He and his men are hiding further back in the cave.
And here Saul comes.

At first, I imagine they were afraid that his army has found them and they're trapped.
But then they find out Saul is alone.
He has never been more vulnerable than right now.
It would be very easy and very simple to kill him.

This is exactly what David's men say in verse 4, **"And the men of David said to him, 'Here is the day of which the LORD said to you, 'Behold, I will give your enemy into your hand, and you shall do to him as it shall seem good to you.'"**

They tell him to do it.
Everyone around David is saying that this is the time.
Saul's time is up; David's time is now.
This must be God's timing!

But notice something.
They are not saying what God said.
David has been anointed.
He has been told that he will be king.
But they do not repeat God's Words exactly.

It seems like they are interpreting it their way.
That this must be what God meant.
This is the day of God's deliverance and God's timing.

"Then David arose and stealthily cut off a corner of Saul's robe."

David listens at first.
He goes towards Saul.

And the first thing he does is cut off the robe.

This seems like the first part of the plan.

We may ask why David did this?

I think back to 1 Samuel 15.

Saul tore part of Samuel's robe away.

This was symbolic that his kingdom would be torn from him.

So, now David will tear it.

He will symbolically tear the king's robe before killing him.

But something happens.

Verse 5, **"Afterward David's heart struck him, because he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe."**

David is convicted.

And this is different than in chapter 21.

There David was repeatedly confronted by God.

I am sure that his heart was struck, but he ignored it.

Here, he listens.

He is convicted that this is not right.

This is not God's timing.

This is another test.

Will David trust in God's timing?

Or will David try to take matters in his own hands?

Will he try to make it God's timing?

Years ago, I listened to a sermon from Andy Stanley on this passage.

And he pointed out that this moment had a lot to do with David legacy.

What did he win his legacy to be?

Decades from now, when his children asked him how he became the king.

Would he want to tell them that he killed God's anointed when he was going to the bathroom?

Would that be something he could say with integrity?

This is the temptation we have.
God's timing is slow.
God's timing is annoying.
God's timing is painful at times.
And to trust God's timing means refusing to try and speed God up.

David's heart is struck because he realizes that that's what he was doing.

Verse 6, **"He said to his men, "The LORD forbid that I should do this thing to my lord, the LORD's anointed."**

David says that God will not allow this.
It is not just that God is forbidding it now.
It is that God has always, for this is a violation of God's law.
Because God decide to the king is going to be.
God can get rid of Saul whenever he wants, but he has not yet.
David cannot do it by violence.

But they also has to go one step further.
He has to stop his men from doing it.

Verse 7, **"So David persuaded his men with these words and did not permit them to attack Saul. And Saul rose up and left the cave and went on his way."**

His men have no problem.
They are willing to get their hands dirty.
After all every good leader needs a hatchet man.
Someone to do the illegal things that can take the blame.
They're happy to be that for David.
But David does the hard thing.
He doesn't just say I can't do it. It hurts my conscience.
He says no this is wrong for anyone to do.
And he does not allow them.

The Hebrew really is not he persuaded them.
It's actually literally he tore them apart.
It has a physically violent undertone to it.

David had to physically stop his men from doing it.
And he was willing to punch him in the face if he had to.
And it seems he had to.

This shows another level of David's faith.
He did not just say no.
He made sure no one else tried to force God's timing.
And we faced the same temptation all the time.
We always face this temptation to force God's timing.
Or to force his hand.

But if we are going to be a people of faith.
If we are going to be like Jesus, then we must not.
You see Jesus faced a similar temptation in the wilderness.
Satan offered him all the kingdoms of the world.
Which Jesus was going to get in God's timing.
But Satan offered a shortcut.
A way to get it a little faster.

And he offers us that same temptation often.
We must resist.
We must be willing to say, even if this would be easy and simple.
I must not violate God's word.
And I will trust his timing.

When we wonder why we haven't been healed?
Why we haven't conceived?
Why we haven't been able to make it financially?
Why has a better job not come up?
Why hasn't the house sold?
Why haven't I found a spouse?
We all have things we are waiting on.
But we have to be willing to wait and to trust the Lord.
Even if it means sitting quietly in a cave in the dark like David.

II. Trust that God is the only judge (v. 8-15).

David continues to trust.

He does not just trust the timing of the Lord, but he also trusts God's judgment and vengeance.

You see David is trusting that God will bring about what he wants in the proper time.

This comes out of the confrontation between David and Saul.

Verse 8, **"Afterward David also arose and went out of the cave, and called after Saul, 'My lord the king.' And when Saul looked behind him, David bowed with his face to the earth and paid homage."**

Look at the way, David acts.

He called Saul, his Lord and King.

Most of us wouldn't want to do that.

And then he bows all the way, face to the dirt to honor a man who does not deserve honor.

He honors a man who does not deserve his homage.

He honors a man who does not deserve his loyalty.

He honors a man who is unrighteous to tyrannical, murderous, foolish and under the judgment of God.

He honors him anyway.

What humility.

Verse 9, **"And David said to Saul, 'Why do you listen to the words of men who say, 'Behold, David seeks your harm?'"**

Notice again that David is assuming the best.

David doesn't ask why are you doing this?

David asked that he wouldn't listen to those who say that he is Saul's enemy.

Verse 10, **"Behold this day your eyes have seen how the LORD gave you today into my hand in the cave. And some told me to kill you, but I spared you. I said, 'I will not put out my hand against my lord, for he is the LORD's anointed.'**

He tells Saul that he has spared his life.
He has done it, even though people told him not to.
He spared Saul because God has chosen him.
David trusts that God is in control of all things.
Saul is only king because God allows it.
And so David refuses to go against God's will.
Even if it is a great cost to himself.

Verse 11, **"See, my father, see the corner of your robe in my hand. For by the fact that I cut off the corner of your robe and did not kill you, you may know and see that there is no wrong or treason in my hands. I have not sinned against you, though you hunt my life to take it."**

He shows Saul part of his robe.
Physical evidence that he could've killed Saul.
He was close enough to kill Saul.
But he did not.
And he shows it as another demonstration that he has nothing against him.
That David has never committed treason.
David has never tried to take Saul's throne.
David has never tried to start a conspiracy to get rid of him.
And even though so tries to kill David he refuses to engage.
And he gives the reason why.

Verse 12, **"May the LORD judge between me and you, may the LORD avenge me against you, but my hand shall not be against you."**

David trust that God will judge.
David will trust God to bring vengeance.
David does not have to get vengeance himself.
David does not have to be the one to force Saul off the throne.
He refuses to.
And David says that in the future he will not oppose Saul.
He will never raise his hand against him.

Verse 13, **"As the proverb of the ancients say, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.' But my hand shall not be against you."**

And he quotes a proverb.

This is not from the book of Proverbs, which hasn't been written yet.

But, David is saying that the one who is wicked will act wickedly.

Which David is not, but Saul is.

He affirms again that He will not take action.

And he further asks why Saul is bothering trying to kill him.

Verse 14, **"After whom has the king of Israel come out? After whom do you pursue? After a dead dog! After a flea!"**

This is humble and self-deprecating.

But there is something more here.

David is calling himself a dog.

Which is what Goliath called him back in chapter 16.

But he goes further to say he is a dead dog.

Or a flea on the dead dog.

Saul has nothing to fear from David.

Verse 15, **"May the LORD therefore be judge and give sentence between me and you, and see to it and plead my cause and deliver me from your hand."**

But Saul may have something to fear from God.

And we know that he does.

Because David calls on the Lord.

He trusts that God will be the judge.

God will determine who is right and wrong.

This is what David trusts in.

He does not have to pass the sentence.

He does not have to decide.

God can and will bring judgment.

God is the judge.

And we need to remember this.

We do not need to be the judge between those who wrong us.
We do not have to stand and pass the judgment.
We just need to trust the Lord.
We do not need to push him out of the way and grab the gavel from his hands.

And God is going to give the sentence.
He will decide what the punishment should be.
He will decide what the consequences are.
That is not our place.
David knew that he should not pass a death sentence on Saul.
That is God's job.
And it is not our job to punish those around us.
It is not our job to get vengeance.
Vengeance belongs to the Lord.
And He will bring it.
David trusts that promise.
And so should we.

God will plead his cause.
David does not need to complain.
He is not trying to launch TikTok videos or control the news cycle.
He is not passing out petitions so that all Israel knows how he is being mistreated.
He is not trying to sue Saul in court.
He is just letting God plead His case.

This is what we need to do to.
This is what it means to trust the Lord's vengeance and judgment.
We let Him be in charge of our PR.
We do not have to plead to everyone else about how we are right and they are wrong.
We can leave that in the Lord's hands.
And we can trust that in the most important court.

In the court of God's judgment, we have an intercessor.
We have Christ who intercedes day and night on our behalf.
He pleads our case before the heavens.
He pleads our case against all accusers and against THE accuser.
We do not need to say a word.

God will deliver.
David trusts that God will deliver him.
He has escaped from Saul hands countless times before.
He has just been delivered again.
And he will be delivered over and over.
He can rest and trust.
He does not need to take matters into his own hands.
He can just trust the promises that God has given him.
He can trust the promises that Jonathan reminded him of.

Every now and then I get sucked into watching recordings of court cases.
And there is one judge named Fleischer I like because he always seems fair.

One time I watched as he was holding the police accountable for violating someone's rights.

And while he is doing this through legalese, the defendant started to interject and want to defend himself.

And the judge just interrupted him and said, "Are you losing right now? Then be quiet."

Because he was actively helping make the charges go away and the kid might have ruined it.

I think that is what God tells us.

We just need to be quiet and trust God's judgement.

Because we are not losing.

Sometimes faith is just being silent.

Waiting on the Lord, Trusting His judgment, is not passive.

It takes an active faith to do nothing.

III. Trust God's judgment with more than lip service (v. 16-22).

All of that sounds so good.

And I think almost everyone in the room would agree.

We want to trust God this way.

We want to have the kind of faith David does.

And we may even proclaim that we do!

But there is a problem.

We have to mean what we say.

We cannot just proclaim that we trust God and His judgments.

We need to actually mean it.

Because as we look at the rest of the story.

Saul says all the right things.

But he does not truly mean them.

They are just lip service.

Verse 16, **"As soon as David had finished speaking these words to Saul, Saul said, 'Is this your voice, my son David?' And Saul lifted up his voice and wept."**

David hears Saul and weeps.

He calls him his son.

Which is a strange thing to call the man he is trying to kill.

Strange to call the man he hates and is jealous of.

But it is Saul acknowledging who David is.

And he weeps because his heart too is being struck.

God is convicting Saul publicly of his sin.

Verse 17, **"He said to David, 'You are more righteous than I, for you have repaid me good, whereas I have repaid you evil.'"**

And he confesses with his mouth.

He declares that David is righteous.

He has done what is right while Saul has not.

However, look close again.

"More righteous than I."

This is a little different.

This is certainly different than Saul saying "I have sinned."

This is different than saying "You are right and I was wrong"

This is different than saying "I have sinned in opposing you and trying to kill you."

I mean try this in an argument of your own.

Instead of admitting you are wrong.

Say, "well you are more right than I am."

What do you mean more righteous?

Saul is not righteous at all.

This is where we see part of his lip service.

And he is generic in his confession of sin.

He says that he has repaid evil to David.

What specifically?

He cannot name.

He does not name it.

And if you cannot name your sin, then you are not repenting of it.

I am trying to teach my children this.

In our house, when you say "I am sorry" you have to say what for.

It is not enough to just generically say "I am sorry."

You have to say "I am sorry being cruel to you."

Saul's apology would be unacceptable in my house.

And it is certainly unacceptable in God's.

If you cannot name your sin, then you are not sorry.

And it is only lip service because you have been caught.

Verse 18, **"And you have declared this day how you have dealt well with me, in that you did not kill me when the LORD put me into your hands."**

But he does give details about how David spared him.

He admits that David definitely saved his life.

Verse 19, **"For if a man finds his enemy, will he let him go away safe? So may the LORD reward you with good for what you have done to me this day."**

And he says that David has done what most would not do.

Notice, though he does not say that Saul wouldn't have done it.

He certainly wouldn't have.

But he does not admit that.

And he wants David rewarded.

Mostly because David has once again done something good for Saul.

Verse 20, **"And now, behold, I know that you shall surely be king, and that the kingdom of Israel shall be established in your hand."**

Then he proclaims God's promise.

He says that he knows David will be king.

This is not new news.

Jonathan told David last chapter that Saul knows this.

God has made it clear.

But here, for the first time we have him actually say the truth aloud.

And he proclaims that David will be king.

And the kingdom of Israel will be in his hand.

Verse 21, **"Swear to me therefore by the LORD that you will not cut off my offspring after me, and that you will not destroy my name out of my father's house."**

But look what Saul does.

His very next thing is a request for himself.

He asks that his offspring not be killed when he is.

The very thing he did to Nob.

And that he wants to do to David.

And he asks that his name will remain.

That his legacy gets to endure.

This is really not about his children or grandchildren.
This is all about himself.
He wants to ensure that his own legacy endures.
That people will know the name of King Saul.

Verse 22, **"And David swore this to Saul. Then Saul went home, but David and his men went up to the stronghold."**

David promises because He trusts the Lord.
And Saul goes home.
David is not fooled.
He stays in the wilderness.
Even though Saul retreats back home.

But it is clear that Saul does not mean it.
Because what would real repentance look like?
What would it look like to actually trust God's promise?
First, Saul would stop trying to kill David.
Which he does it again in chapter 26.
Then it would look like stepping down.
If Saul believed this was what was right.
Then he should do it himself.
He should humble himself and bow down to David.
To remove the crown.
To step down from the throne.
To tear his royal robe and to weep.
And to seek God's forgiveness.

Saul says some of the right things.
But he does not mean it.
Because he does like live like it.

This is our temptation.
Especially as followers of Jesus and Christians.
We follow the Lord.

We believe what is right.
We all would say that God is in control.
We would say that vengeance belongs to God alone.
We would say that the ends don't justify the means.

But then when things get hard, we don't live like it.
Following Jesus means more than just the words.
The gospel is not just about believing intellectual things about Christ.
It means we give our whole lives to Jesus.
Accepting Christ just not just mean praying a prayer.
We pray a prayer and then act like we prayed that.
Because faith is not just in words or in the heart, but in our actions too.
We trust in Him with our words.
We trust in Him with our bodies.
We offer all of ourselves as a living sacrifice to God.
And we do so because Jesus is worth it.

It is hard to wait.
It is hard to trust God's judgment.
His timing is perfect, but it takes so long.
And we wonder at times if waiting is worth it.
When Brianna and I were engaged, I had a countdown on my phone.
It was an old flip phone and every day I would manually change the number to countdown until the wedding.
And it started at 200 days.
Then it slowly trickled down.
But then our wedding got pushed back till we graduated and it climbed to 400 days.
And I had to wait.
But a decade of marriage later, she was worth waiting for.
And at the end of our lives there is another wedding when Jesus returns.
And Jesus is worth waiting for so much more than anything in this life.
His timing is perfect.
It will probably be longer than you want it to be. But he is worth it.